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PRESS RELEASE

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IDENTITY THEFT RING TARGET RESIDENTIAL LOANS AND DOWN PAYMENT ASSISTANCE

Terrell L. Harris, United States Attorney for the Western District of Tennessee, announced today that on Wednesday, May 1, 2002, a federal grand jury in Memphis, Tennessee returned an indictment charging twenty-four individuals for their roles in an identity theft scheme which targeted Federal Housing Authority loans and down payment assistance loans from the City of Memphis, Tennessee Division of Housing and Community Development.

The indictment charges the individuals with: conspiracy to engage in making false statements and social security fraud; identity theft; making false statements; and social security fraud. The indictment alleges that the defendants utilized Employer Identification Numbers, issued by the Internal Revenue Service, as if they were social security numbers issued by the Commissioner of the Social Security Administration. In addition, the defendants created nine digit numbers which they also used fraudulently as legitimate social security numbers.

The indictment further alleges that the purpose of using the assumed social security numbers was to enable the defendants to qualify for residential mortgage loans. Twelve of the

defendants were successful in obtaining the loans. Of the twelve successful defendants, eleven also qualified for down payment assistance loans from the City of Memphis Division of Housing and Community Development.

The individuals named in the indictment include: Terrell J. Green; Marcus Martin; Sandra D. Jones; Lisa Anderson; Larry Henderson; Barbara Richmond; Katrina Alexander; Uretha Smith; Shontea Lewis Sheppard; Star Lee Hall; Michelle Williams; Sherry Minor; Shirley Mosby Bryant; Robert Kelly III; Carol Macklin; Angela Warren; Sheila D. Barton; Nathan Malone; Kenneth D. Cast; Christopher Rose; Sedrick Cast; Thomas Anthony Taylor; Tanisha Jones Ward; and William H. Cast, Jr.

If convicted, the defendants could face terms of imprisonment of five years for each count of conspiracy, making false statements, and social security fraud. There is also a maximum term of imprisonment of 15 years for each identity theft violation. The maximum fine is \$250,000 for each count of conviction.

The Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration is investigating the case. Tracy Berry is the Assistant United States Attorney.

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